

Message Text

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42

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TOFAS 262

DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR FCA DIVISIONS

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: WEEKLY DROUGHT SITUATION REPORT

REF: TOFAS 254; PARIS 24705; TOFAS 259

1. DURING LAST FEW DAYS OF AUGUST TORRENTIAL RAINS FELL IN VARIOUS REGIONS OF FRANCE. SOUTH AGAIN RECEIVED HEAVIEST PRECIPITATION. IN CENTRAL FRANCE RETURNING VACATION TRAFFIC WAS DISRUPTED BY "GULLY WASHERS" AROUND LYON. IN DROUGHT-PARCHED AREAS OF NORTHERN AND WESTERN FRANCE SOME HEAVY RAINS WERE REPORTED. REPORTS OF 26.2 MM OF RAIN AT BOULOGNE-SUR-MER AND ONLY 2 MM AT CALAIS, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, FOCUS ON INCONSISTENCY OF PRECIPITATION. FURTHERMORE, EVEN IN AREAS WHERE HEAVY RAIN WAS RECEIVED, WATER OFTEN QUICKLY RAN OFF WITH LITTLE LASTING BENEFIT. STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RAINFALL WILL BE NEEDED OVER LENGTHY PERIOD OF TIME TO REPAIR DROUGHT DAMAGE. THIS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR PRODUCTION OF ALREADY COMPROMISED CATCH CROPS AND BURNED PASTURES WHICH HAVE LITTLE TIME FOR REBOUND WITH SEPTEMBER HERE. REPLACEMENT OF MOISTURE WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY URGENT IN A MONTH FOR PLANTINGS OF WINTER CEREALS.

2. GRAIN ESTIMATES UNCHANGED FROM LAST DROUGHT REPORT. FRENCH POTATO PRODUCTION (SEE FR-6053, AUGUST 27) NOW ESTI
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ESTIMATED AT 5.3 MILLION MT. QUALITY POOR WITH AVERAGE

SIZES 5 CM. AND SMALLER. IN PLACE NORMAL FAVORABLE TRADE BALANCE IN POTATOES OF 100,000 TO 300,000 MT, IMPORTS ARE NOW EXPECTED AT 1.2 TO 1.3 MILLION MT WITH NEGLIGIBLE EXPORTS.

3. MILK COLLECT IN JULY WAS 14 PERCENT BELOW 1976 AND POOR DELIVERIES ARE ANTICIPATED AGAIN IN AUGUST (SEE TOFAS 254). ANOTHER MEASURE OF CONDITION OF CATTLE HERD IS REPORT THAT AVERAGE WEIGHT OF CATTLE HAS DECLINED 5 PERCENT FROM NORMAL LEVEL THIS TIME OF YEAR. EVEN WITH IDEAL WEATHER, RECOVERY OF HERD WILL TAKE SOME TIME. PROBLEM OF MAINTENANCE OF CATTLE HERD DURING FALL AND WINTER STILL MAJOR PREOCCUPATION WITH AGMIN AND ITEB (TECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF CATTLE RAISERS) FORESEEING VERY HIGH SLAUGHTER RATES.

4. ANIMAL FEEDERS STILL COMPLAINING ABOUT RECENTLY APPROVED 8.75 PERCENT BOOST IN PRICE COMPOUND FEEDS. SPOT SHORTAGES REPORTED. TOTAL HOG PRODUCTION NOW ESTIMATED AT SAME LEVEL AS LAST YEAR IN LIEU OF SMALL INCREASE. POULTRY PRODUCTION STILL EXPECTED TO INCREASE 3 TO 4 PERCENT OVER LAST YEAR. ON OTHER HAND, COMPOUND FEED PURCHASES FOR CATTLE OVER DOUBLE NORMAL LEVELS. WITH BAPSA TAX (TAX TO AID FARMERS) EXONERATION ON WHEAT IN FORCE, COMPOUNDERS USING LARGE AMOUNT OF WHEAT IN FEED PREPARATIONS.

5. POLITICAL SCENE HEATING UP OVER AID TO AGRICULTURE. CATTLEMEN IN REGIONS NOT DESIGNATED FOR MAXIMUM BENEFIT HAVE DEMONSTRATED AND CLAIMED THEY SUFFER FROM "POLITICAL DECISIONS". SUGAR BEET PRODUCERS ARE DEMANDING AN INCREASE OF 0.5 FRANCS PER KILO FOR SUGAR AT RETAIL TO COMPENSATE THEM FOR LOSSES. WHILE STRAINS WITHIN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY WILL CONTINUE, MAIN FOCUS OF POLITICAL PROBLEM WILL BE UPON METHOD OF FINANCING AID. LEADERS OF "DIRECTOR'S UNION" OF SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES CONTINUE BITTER COMPLAINTS THAT IT HAS BEEN SINGLED OUT TO PAY FOR AID TO FARMERS.

6. DEMONSTRATIONS BY FARMERS REPORTED IN SOUTHWEST AND EXPECTED IN PARIS IN NEXT FEW DAYS. WILL REPORT AS UNCLASSIFIED

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SITUATION DEVELOPS.

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